

# Community Information:

## Internet Crimes Against Children

Prepared By: The Milwaukee County Office of the Sheriff Criminal Investigations Division

Internet crime is one of the fastest growing areas of crime in the United States today, and children aged 10 to 17 are one of the largest groups of victims for this type of crime. Since 1997 The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children' CyberTipline has received over 546,600 leads regarding Internet crimes against children in the United States. Additionally, the FBI reports that over the past decade there has been a 2026% increase in Internet crimes against children and teens.

A 2006 study from the Crimes Against Children Research Center ("Online Victimization of Youth: Five Years Later") puts this problem in perspective. That study showed that 1 out of every 7 children online has received a sexual solicitation from an adult while online. Additionally, the study cites that 75% of the predators who sexually solicited a child online attempted to convince the child to meet them in person to follow through on their solicitation.

In many cases, the solicitor successfully convinces the child to meet them to engage in sexual activity. Research done by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children show that an average of 50 children fall prey to an Internet predator each week in the United States alone. Additionally, the National Juvenile Online Victimization Survey reports that in 73% of the children victimized by this crime met the offender on multiple occasions for multiple sexual encounters.

To combat this problem and to protect the children of this community from the real danger posed by Internet predators, Milwaukee County Sheriff David A. Clarke, Jr. established the "Computer Crime Investigations Unit" in the year 2004. The primary goal of this unit is the prevention of these crimes along with aggressive enforcement of these crimes by identifying and arresting predators targeting children online.

Since its inception, the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office, Computer Crime Investigations Unit has arrested numerous predators targeting children in our community. The individuals arrested have come from very diverse backgrounds. Their ages have ranged from 20 to 57 years of age, and their education levels range from High School Graduate/High School Equivalency to a Law School Graduate. The occupations of the individuals arrested include unemployed individuals, college students, general laborers, security officer, personal trainer, business analyst, pharmacist, attorney, school bus driver, school teachers, and a vice president of a large an international asset management firm.

While the investigations conducted by the Computer Crime Investigations Unit are a vital part of the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office response to this problem, efforts to thwart these crimes must include the education of children, parents, and educators to the dangers that exist for children on the Internet. To facilitate this education, the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office provides Internet Safety seminars to Milwaukee area schools, parents and community groups.

The seminar consist of information regarding the prevalent dangers to children as well as safety information and tips that parents and children can use to minimize the chances of becoming a victim of an Internet "predator". Participants in the Internet safety seminars are provided with information regarding when to inform Law Enforcement as well as information on numerous agencies at the Local, State, and Federal level whom they can contact to report Internet crimes. Additionally, all participants in the Internet Safety Seminars are provided Internet Safety Contracts. These contracts are a pledge between parents and children to engage in online safe behavior and to report all instances of sexual solicitations and unwanted exposures to harmful materials online.

To schedule an Internet Safety seminar, contact Sergeant Thomas Liebenthal via telephone at 414-278-3959, or via email at [tliebenthal@milwcnty.com](mailto:tliebenthal@milwcnty.com).